

connected to an inner space of the base tube 1 so that the pressure drop is a function of the dimension and a number of the collecting tubes. See, e.g., page 5, lines 9-13 of Applicant's specification.

WIPO '314 discloses a drain element for collecting hydrocarbons including a screen TM enclosing a suction cylinder CA. The screen is formed with rods TT, TC extending along the longitudinal direction AL and uniformly distributed around the section cylinder. At least one of the rods is hollow to form a collecting rod TC, the collecting rod TC having a lateral orifice and communicating with the inside of the suction cylinder through one of its ends. The collecting rods in WIPO '314 are the support for the filter FI and, therefore, the two ends of the collecting rods or tubes are fixed on the two crown sections CL.

According to the present invention, the filter element is centered on the base tube by longitudinal braces. The braces are arranged according to the diameter of the tube so as to divide the annular space defined by the filter element and the tube into sectors delimited by the braces. The collecting tubes are arranged and open into these sectors. Such is neither disclosed nor suggested by WIPO '314. In WIPO '314, the collecting rods or tubes themselves support the filter. There are no separate braces dividing the annular space between the filter and the tube into sectors. The Examiner apparently deems the collecting rods TC, TT to be the same as the longitudinal braces of the present invention. However, if one interprets the collecting rods TC, TT of WIPO '314 as the longitudinal braces of the present invention, then there are no separate collecting tubes in this arrangement or, at least, no collecting tubes which are arranged into sectors delimited by longitudinal braces and which open into the sectors by one end. Thus, the liner of WIPO '314 does not anticipate the presently claimed liner device.

Moreover, while the collecting tubes of the present invention open into the sectors between the longitudinal braces by one end, the collecting rods TC of WIPO '314 have lateral orifices OC. By having the collecting tubes open into the sectors by one end, according to the present invention, the pressure drop is a function of the dimension and number of collecting tubes. Having the collecting tubes open into the sectors by one end so that the pressure drop is a function of a dimension and number of the collecting tubes is not disclosed in WIPO '314. That is, according to the present invention, since the collecting tubes open into the sectors by one end, the length of the collecting tubes must by definition be shorter than the length of the filter or else they would not open by one end into the sectors. In contrast, the collecting rods TC, TT appear to extend from one to the other of the crown sections CL, CL.

According to the present invention, the liner device has both longitudinal braces which divide the annular space into sectors and collecting tubes which are arranged in the sectors. The advantage of such a construction is a separation of the filters means from the collecting means. Such is neither disclosed nor suggested by WIPO '314 where the collecting rods TC, TT themselves support the filter FI.

For the foregoing reasons, WIPO '314 does not anticipate the presently claimed invention.

Claim 4 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over WIPO '314 in view of Ranney. Applicant traverses this rejection and request reconsideration thereof.

The deficiencies of each of WIPO '314 and Ranney are noted above. It is submitted the combination of WIPO '314 and Ranney does not disclose and would not suggested the presently claimed invention. In particular, the combination would


not have suggested at least the arrangement of braces and collecting tubes presently claimed. Accordingly, claim 4 is patentable at least for this reason.

Applicant notes the indication of allowable subject matter in claim 6. However in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is submitted that all of the claims now in the application are in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,

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